The Implications of a New Era in Arms Control on Regional Nonproliferation and Nuclear Materials Management

Workshop sponsored by the Nonproliferation and Arms Control Division and the Northeast Chapter of the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management (INMM)

Ambassador Linton Brooks -- Keynote Address

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Thank you. The Institute of Nuclear Materials Management has been very successful over the years in engaging its members in meaningful discussion of topical issues. I am pleased to be able to contribute some thoughts to your deliberations on the implications of this new period in history, for regional security and nuclear materials management. You have an impressive series of panel members, who I am sure will offer diverse points of view.

What I am supposed to do as your keynote speaker is to put the new era into context. Being a keynote speaker is a wonderful experience. You get to claim that you are putting things in context, while what you really do is offer questions without answers. I'm going to be firmly in that tradition this morning. I want to suggest to you that there are at least four major trends that bear on the topic of your conference. They include:

- First, the transformation—some would say the demise—of East-West arms control.
- Second, the new strategic relationship with Russia, in which we are no longer adversaries but not yet allies.
- Third, The blurring of nonproliferation and counter-terrorism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and
- Fourth, the growing recognition that traditional non-proliferation regimes are inadequate and need to be augmented.

<u>Arms control</u>

Let's start with arms control. I suggest to you that arms control is largely the agenda of the past. The workshop organizers use the phrase "A New Era in Arms Control" in their title. As we look at the broad range of national security interests that the United States is facing, there is a legacy of arms control that inevitably colors our way of looking at the future. But if "arms control" means east-west bilateral discussions focused on the nuclear threat, that era is over.

I spent a lot of my life working arms control issues. They were important and I'm proud of what we accomplished. But we have a new relationship with our old adversaries, the Russians. When President Bush met with Russian President Putin at Camp David on September 27, 2003, he said:

> "For decades, when the leaders of our two countries met, they talked mainly of missiles and warheads, because the only common ground we shared was the desire to avoid catastrophic conflict. In recent years, the United States and Russia have made great progress in building a new relationship. Today, our relationship is broad and it is strong.

> "Old suspicions are giving way to new understanding and respect. Our goal is to bring the U.S.-Russian relationship to a new level of partnership"

Ironically, the recently implemented Treaty of Moscow—which specifies levels of strategic nuclear arms far lower than I was ever able to achieve—illustrates this point. The Treaty reduces deployed strategic nuclear weapons to 1700 to 2200 by 31 December 2012. It is short, simple, and lacking in any of the extensive verification provisions of the past. That is because, unlike its Cold War counterparts, it doesn't seek to constrain adversaries but to inform and reassure partners. I'm not quite sure what to call it, but it bears little relationship to the complex arms control agreements of the past.

The Russian relationship

That brings us to the second major trend, the transformation of the U.S. – Russian relationship. Last week U.S. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham and the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy, Alexsandr Rumyantsev, spoke before the United Nations. The Secretary addressed the strategic partnership with Russia. He noted that,

> "Working together, we have taken steps to end the production of weapons-usable fissile material; to dispose of excess defense material–including that removed from dismantled nuclear weapons; and to redirect nuclear resources in Russian and elsewhere toward peaceful, commercial applications. Our efforts enhance transparency and cooperation, and help to establish a basis for a mutually beneficial more secure bilateral relationship that virtually assures that the nuclear arms race becomes a relic of the past."

The extremely close working relations between Secretary Abraham and Minster Rumyantsev, which mirrors the close relationship between Presidents Bush and Putin, is both a reflection of the new strategic partnership and a contributor to it. Our strategic partnership with Russia has become an important component of our strategy against terrorism. The most obvious example is our cooperation to secure vast quantities of weapons-usable nuclear material. The United States has developed a system of domestic safeguards and physical security systems and Russia has benefited from this experience. But we have also worked together to ensure that technology and knowledge do not leak out from Russia to proliferators, to address specific concerns, such as the proliferation risks of research reactors, to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency, to work toward resolving the dangers posed by the North Korean nuclear weapons program, and to launch a global initiative against so-called "dirty bombs," or Radiological Dispersal Devices.

Non-proliferation and counter-terrorism

Our cooperation with Russia is important because of the third major trend I want to discuss: the merging of non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. Traditionally, we thought of nuclear non-proliferation as exclusively concerned with keeping state that didn't have nuclear weapons from acquiring them. That's still important, of course. But in the aftermath of 9/11 we have become more and more concerned with keeping nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists. This is why we have focused so heavily on Russia, with its vast quantities of poorly secured materials.

Our strategy has four elements:

- **Stop making material**. In 1997, we entered into the bilateral Plutonium Production Reactor Agreement with Russia that codified the shutdown of 14 U.S. plutonium production reactors, along with 10 such reactors in Russia. Last March, the Secretary signed an important implementing agreement that will lead to the shutdown of the last three reactors in Russia that are still producing weapons-grade plutonium.

- **Consolidate what exists.** We have undertaken significant consolidation within Russia. And just last week, Secretary Abraham and Minister Rumyantsev signed a statement that will provide a routine mechanism for moving highly enriched uranium fuel and spent fuel from Russian designed back to Russia for safe storage and disposition.

- **Protect what is consolidated**. Our cooperative efforts with Russia are making major progress in improving security. Since this Administration took office we have accelerated these efforts significantly and now will complete our upgrades by 2008, two years ahead of schedule.

- **Eliminate existing material.** More than 170 tons of Russia's HEU has been converted to non-weapons grade material for use in American commercial reactors under what is often called the "megatons to Megawatts" program. Altogether, 500 metric tons of Russia's HEU will be converted and used to support civilian nuclear power. We are also committed to creating a stockpile in the United States of low-enriched uranium derived from Russian HEU, further reducing HEU inventories. This stockpile will be used to augment our strategic uranium reserve to enhance our domestic energy security. In addition, we are working with the Russians to eliminate 34 metric tons of weapons grade plutonium in each country, enough for a total of 17,000 nuclear weapons.

The United States is setting the example with respect to materials. We have not produced fissile material for nuclear weapons for more than a decade. We have identified 174 tons of excess HEU that will be blended down and used for civil purposes. To date, over 40 metric tons have been down-blended for use in commercial reactors. The United States has also placed 12 more tons of excess fissile material under IAEA safeguards.

<u>The non-proliferation regime</u>

The final trend is a disturbing one. Increasingly it has become clear that the existing non-proliferation regime, built around the Nonproliferation treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency is inadequate for current challenges. The Non-Proliferation Treaty has served as a cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime for many years. The grand bargain, in which states forswear developing nuclear weapons, in exchange for the guarantee of the benefits of nuclear energy and science carried great weight, and prevented the creation of a large number of nuclear weapons states, widely predicted in the 50s and 60s. By any measure, the NPT was a success.

But the war in Iraq in 1991 changed our perception of the adequacy of the non-proliferation regime. Growing concern resulted in the negotiation of the Additional Protocols to the Non Proliferation Treaty. Many states have now implemented the Additional protocol. The U.S.

Additional Protocol is awaiting Senate advice and consent. We have made a good start, but there remain countries for which this has not been enough.

We now face the challenges created by rogue states such as North Korea and Iran. North Korea has highlighted a limitation of the existing regime, in that a country can derive the benefits of assistance in the nuclear realm, and when close to a nuclear weapons capability, withdraw from the treaty. The challenge in Iran is also urgent; Iran should recognize that it is in its interests and that of its neighbors to agree to the Additional Protocol, and practice openness and transparency in its nuclear programs.

For the longer term, perhaps a new grand bargain is required. We must recognize the nuclear proliferation risks posed by the acquisition of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. Possession of these capacities in the hands of states with questionable commitments to nonproliferation should automatically raise a warning sign and should be discouraged.

We must also strengthen IAEA safeguards against–or consider stronger steps to discourage–indigenous enrichment or reprocessing that could support illegitimate and proscribed activities. While the Additional Protocol will help, we need to think of further ways to address this problem. We should look for ways to ensure that the IAEA has the tools it needs to effectively address the problem posed by a state like North Korea, before such a State announces it has established a nuclear weapons capability.

We also may need to think about new approaches to the fuel cycle that strictly limit the use of enrichment and reprocessing and access to nuclear weapons technology while ensuring that nuclear energy and power, medicine, agriculture, and other peaceful nuclear benefits can be enjoyed in all responsible nations.

In short, we need to think about how to ensure that the essential "bargain" between nuclear and non-nuclear states can be sustained into the future. As one element, there needs to be an alternative security construct for countries that have considered seeking nuclear weapons but have now renounced that course. Openness and transparency can alleviate suspicions that threats might exist, where in fact, they don't. Here once again, there is a lesson for Iran: it claims not to seek nuclear weapons but it needs to demonstrate the sincerity of that claim.

Summary, conclusions, and questions

These trends--the reduced importance of East-West arms control, the new strategic relationship with Russia, the blurring of nonproliferation and counter-terrorism and the need to strengthen existing non-proliferation regimes—will shape the future and I urge you to take them into account as you work through this ambitious agenda today. I promised to give you some questions to chew on. Here are a few:

Am I right that traditional arms control, at least in an east-west context, simply isn't very important anymore? If so, what are the implications? What replaces the lexicon of arms control?

How can we apply the four-part strategy on materials protection globally? Do we build on existing models of cooperation with Russia? Do we build on the IAEA? On something else?

What is the new non-proliferation regime? How do we bring it about?

How can the United States leverage the new cooperative relationship with Russia to answer any of these questions?

As you wrestle with these and other questions, I hope that you will keep in mind the trends that I have outlined. We, collectively, face significant new challenges in a world we are still struggling to understand. We need new ideas and fresh approaches to deal with those challenges. Your job today is to find them.

Thank you very much, and I will be happy to try to answer your questions.